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Illegal Israeli actions in Occupied East Jerusalem and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory

Security Council
Sixty-second year

Identical letters dated 26 February 2007 from the Permanent Observer of Palestine to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

While the Palestinian people remained besieged, confined to a canton-like reality and literally starved, Israel, the occupying Power, continues to launch its campaign of death and destruction against the Palestinian people throughout the occupied West Bank.

The Israeli occupying forces have been conducting since yesterday, 25 February 2007, a wide-scale barbaric military aggression against the already besieged city of Nablus in the northern West Bank, killing one civilian and injuring scores of others in addition to arresting tens of Palestinians, demolishing homes and converting others to military outposts while keeping the families living there hostage, forbidden to move or contact the outside world. Israeli occupying forces have even converted Jamal Abdel Nasser School in the old city into a detention centre. Among the detained is journalist Nayef Breik, who owns the local Sanabel TV station. Israeli occupying forces broke into the station, arrested Mr. Breik and confiscated transmission and other equipment.

Nablus residents woke up on 25 February to the wide-scale incursion, which began with Israeli occupying forces invading Palestinian airwaves and reading out the names of who they called were "wanted" Palestinians. Soon after, the entire city was placed under a curfew, confining tens of thousands of residents to their homes. The Israeli occupying forces also obstructed the movement of medical crews.

Today, 26 February 2007, Israeli occupying forces shot dead 42-year-old Anan Al-Tibi while he was inside his home and injured his son Ashraf, 22 years old. The heinous and brutal killing is but one example of the conduct of Israeli occupying forces against Palestinian civilians and the utter disregard they have for the value of Palestinian life.

Elsewhere in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, Israeli occupying forces continue to conduct wide-scale arrest campaigns throughout the West Bank while

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maintaining the stranglehold on the Gaza Strip and its 1.4 million residents. Additionally, illegal Israeli settlers continue to carry out attacks against Palestinian civilians and their properties, especially in Hebron. Their impunity is fortified by the turning of a blind eye by the Israeli occupying forces to these attacks, the damage they cause and the terror they spread.

Israel, the occupying Power, also continues to shun international law and relevant United Nations resolutions with regard to its continued construction of the illegal separation wall in the West Bank. Today, 26 February 2007, Israeli occupying forces demolished 10 homes near Tulkarem to make way for the illegal wall. These actions are utterly rejected and are in contravention of international law, international humanitarian law and human rights law. Additionally, they are in grave violation of the advisory opinion of 9 July 2004 of the International Court of Justice and General Assembly resolution ES-10/15.

The Government of Israel also continues its campaign to create a new demographic composition in Occupied East Jerusalem and to alter its cultural and religious heritage through the ongoing demolition and diggings at Bab Al-Magharibeh. These provocative actions, which latest reports indicate are continuing unabated under the cover of night, clearly demonstrate the intransigence of the Israeli Government and its persistence in defying the will of the international community and violating international law and United Nations resolutions.

It must be noted that the historical corridor, which the Israeli occupying authorities now plan to demolish, was wilfully neglected by the Israeli occupying authorities, which did not allow any restoration works despite repeated Waqf warnings of the corridor's deteriorating condition. Additionally, the demolition of the historical corridor at this gate, which is part of the Islamic Waqf, is intended to erase an important part of the occupied city's Muslim heritage to create new facts on the ground by expanding the square at the Western Wall (Al-Buraq) of Al-Aqsa Mosque. It is important to recall that the expansion of this square in the past came at the expense of Palestinian homes in the Old City, which have been illegally demolished by the Israeli occupying forces since 1967.

Moreover, the Israeli occupying forces continue to bar Palestinian worshippers from entering Al-Haram Al-Sharif and illegally detain scores of Palestinians protesting Israeli actions in the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound. On Saturday, 24 February 2007, a 60-year-old Palestinian woman from Beit Hanina in Occupied East Jerusalem, Yusra Al-Rijbi, died of her critical head wounds inflicted by the Israeli occupying forces during demonstrations two weeks ago protesting Israeli excavation and demolition works in the Al-Aqsa Mosque compound.

The Security Council has adopted 16 resolutions regarding the city of Jerusalem, and repeatedly declared that all measures and arrangements taken by Israel, the occupying Power, including legislative and administrative ones, which aim at changing the legal status, demographic composition and character of the city, are null and void and without any legal validity whatsoever. Furthermore, the Council has also repeatedly reaffirmed the applicability of the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949 to all the territories occupied by Israel in 1967, including East Jerusalem. Hence, the Council must now assume its responsibility in ensuring Israel's adherence to these resolutions and its obligations as an occupying Power.

Obviously, Israel, the occupying Power, is crossing all boundaries by intensifying its campaign of siege, imposed starvation, murder, judaization of East Jerusalem and construction of the illegal separation wall as well as the expansion of illegal settlements, amid the inability of the Security Council to stop the Israeli violations of international law and relevant Security Council and General Assembly resolutions.

We call on all parties to take immediate measures urgently to ensure that Israel, the occupying Power, ends its destructive campaign and fulfils its responsibilities in accordance with international law. Additionally, we call on the international community, particularly the High Contracting Parties to the Fourth Geneva Convention of 1949, to assume their responsibilities in ensuring that Israel respects the de jure applicability of that Convention to the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, and adheres to its provisions. In this context, it is imperative for the Council to take urgent measures to confront these Israeli actions to ensure respect for international law and to prevent further escalation of the situation in the region.

This letter is in follow-up to our previous 277 letters to you regarding the ongoing crisis in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, since 28 September 2000. These letters, dated from 29 September 2000 (A/55/432-S/2000/921) to 9 February 2007 (A/ES-10/379-S/2007/75), constitute a basic record of the crimes being committed by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people since September 2000. For all of these war crimes, State terrorism and systematic human rights violations committed against the Palestinian people, Israel, the occupying Power, must be held accountable and the perpetrators must be brought to justice.

I should be grateful if you would arrange to have the present letter distributed as a document of the tenth emergency special session of the General Assembly, under agenda item 5, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Riyad **Mansour**
Ambassador
Permanent Observer